



June 24, 2019

Dear Member of the Class of 2023:

Congratulations on your decision to join the Smith College community.

Welcome! As the Dean of the First-Year Class, I look forward to meeting you in the fall. I serve as your class dean, which means that I am responsible for overseeing the academic progress of all entering new first year students.

Academic life at Smith College revolves around the commitment by students, faculty and the administration to an excellent liberal arts education. In general, you will find any combination of courses totaling 16-18 credits—the “normal load”—to be an exhilarating intellectual experience. You will also find that it is a major leap from high school in terms of the work, organization and discipline required, so be prepared!

When you arrive at Smith you will be assigned a liberal arts adviser (LAA). During orientation you will meet your adviser in order to discuss the courses you are interested in taking, and to get suggestions about courses you may not have considered. Advising is central to my role as your class dean. I am also available to you for academic advice as well as your liberal arts adviser who is essential to your academic success. You will want to get to know them. Often they can be your first step toward academic support and help.

On our “[For New Students](#)” website you will find a link to our *Making the Most of Smith* booklet. This is a guide to your preparation for living within the Smith community—academically, residentially and socially. Read it! By working your way through *Making the Most of Smith*, you will begin your transition to college. Seriously, read it; the information in *Making the Most of Smith* may prove invaluable.

Be sure to look at the on-line catalog and websites for the various academic programs paying special attention to the parts of *Making the Most of Smith* entitled, “Advising and Curriculum,” and the “Curricular Planning Worksheet.” The “Advising and Curriculum” section of *Making the Most of Smith* can help you find introductory courses in fields that interest you.

Using the “Curricular Planning Worksheet” you can start to plan your first year’s course work. By the time you arrive on campus your ideas may change however. In your future meeting with your liberal arts adviser and by using this planning tool the goal is for you to find a schedule of classes to get your first semester off to great start. Remember, you must take a Writing Intensive (WI) course in your first-year at Smith and I strongly encourage you to consider taking a First Year Seminar (FYS).

Your central resource for academic information is the *Smith College Course Catalog*. The *Catalog* includes information about the organization of the curriculum, defines the Liberal Arts, explains Smith's "Academic Rules and Procedures," and offers descriptions and requirements for all majors, minors and concentrations. For specific courses held in fall 2019, see the [Schedule of Classes](#) on the Registrar's website.

You should also make sure to explore the many services Smith offers all its students, such as Disability Services — support for students with physical disabilities and learning differences (413-585-2071, TTY/TDD 413-585-2072); the Jacobson Center—consultation for writing, tutorial services in all fields, workshops, study skills and time management strategies; and the Spinelli Center for Quantitative Reasoning—assistance with math and quantitative skills. In addition, the [Libraries](#) have a very informative website.

As part of our orientation, all entering students are asked to purchase and read a book before their arrival. This year's community initiative is prompted by the college's collective focus on climate change. Our 2019 reading choice is titled, *How Culture Shapes the Climate Change Debate* by Andrew J. Hoffman. More information about the reading choice and program is available in the [Smith Reads](#) section of our new students' website. The book may be purchased from your local bookstore or on-line.

In early July you and your parents or guardian will hear from Susan Etheredge, Dean of the College. In the beginning of August you will also hear from the Office of Student Affairs about your house and room assignment.

In closing, I would again like to personally welcome you to Smith. My primary concern as your class dean is your academic progress. I am also available to you for personal advice and advice on the college in general. You can learn more about me and the [Class Deans Office](#) where I work (College Hall 101).

Smith's mission is to *educate women of promise for lives of distinction*. Everyone at Smith is here to help you achieve that promise—and we all look forward to meeting you in the fall. In the meantime, enjoy these next few months before your first year at Smith begins.

Sincerely,



Jane M. Stangl, Ph.D.
Dean of the First Year Class

p.s. The previous post of this letter included reference to "Trial Registration". The college has discontinued this optional summer exercise.